

ASSESSMENT AND RECORD-KEEPING

Introductory Statement

This policy was formulated by the staff of Ransboro National School at a staff meeting in October, 2008. All staff were involved in the formulation of this policy. This policy was reviewed on September 14th, 2012 by Principal and Learning Support Team.

Rationale

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process and takes place throughout the school using both formal and informal methods. Assessment is ongoing and is vital for the continued progress and development of the children in our care, to ensure that each child is enabled to reach his/her full potential.

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

As with all of our policies, the child is central to this policy and the essence of this policy is that children are encouraged and supported in their development to their full potential and also that the talents of each child are recognised and celebrated across a broad spectrum of curricular areas.

Aims

The aims of this policy are as follows:

- To ensure that there is a balanced emphasis on assessment for learning in our school, not solely on assessment of learning.
- To have clear and consistent guidelines in place for teachers in relation to assessment.
- To ensure that a variety of assessment tools are used throughout our school.
- To create a broad picture of each child as a learner.

Guidelines

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching-learning process and takes place throughout the school using both formal and informal methods. The following are methods that are employed throughout the school:

Teacher Observation(Informal Assessment):

Observation of children in their oral work, written work, ability to listen, communicate and relate with others. Teacher observation is a highly valuable method of assessing children, and we place great value to this type of assessment in our school.

Questioning(Informal Assessment):

Children are regularly questioned orally to assess what has been learned in a lesson or series of lessons. Children will also answer questions in written activities, to assess learning. Teachers vary the type of questioning methods used in their classrooms, some of which are listed here: Oral questions to include closed questions, open-ended questions, probing, prompts. Teachers use the questioning guidelines from the NCCA Guidelines" Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum" (p.86-90 attached as APPENDIX 1)

Spelling Tests:

Children's spelling skills are assessed through regular spellchecks, dictation exercises and analysis of free writing. Spelling programmes have been devised using a variety of resource material including Jolly Grammar, The National Strategy for Spelling (UK), Phonics programmes, commonly misspelt words and the "Spell, Write, Check" Programme (6th class).

Litriú:

Tugtar scrúdú do na páistí i litriú Ghaeilge maraon leis an scrúdú litriú i mBéarla. Tógtar na litriú as an leabhar léitheoireachta, nó ón ábhar cómhra.

Teacher Designed Tests:

Written tests are regularly set for the children in various areas of the curriculum to assess what has been learned in a lesson or series of lessons. The Mathemagic Maths Assessment tests are in use in the classrooms as a resource in this assessment. Regular testing of other curricular areas takes place in the classes.

Portfolios:

Children's portfolios are used to compile samples of work in different areas of the curriculum in order to assess progress over the school year. Usually the portfolio contains random samples of work and is a useful assessment tool in tracing the development in a child's work over a period of time.

Early Intervention & Prevention:

There is a strong emphasis placed on early intervention in Ransboro NS. Children in Junior & Senior Infants who are identified by the class teacher as having a difficulty in grasping any area of the curriculum are brought to the attention of the LS teacher and follow up support is offered.

From Junior Infants to 2nd Class the following strategies are employed:

- Infant meetings with parents, strategies offered for supporting children's education at home
- Tips for reading, speaking & listening, and writing are given to parents of children up to 2nd
- Forward Together Programme
- Sounds Abound Programme
- Jolly Phonics
- Jolly Grammar
- Shared/Paired Reading Initiatives (with teachers)
- Reading Buddies (with pupils)

- Shared Reading with parents
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In Class Support

- A large emphasis is placed on “In-class” support using the following programmes: Peer Tutoring, Station Teaching, Team Teaching, “Building Bridges of Comprehension”, Creative Writing Programme (Taken from “Special Education in the Mainstream School” by Fiona King). The effectiveness of the implementation of these programmes is assessed through “before and after” testing using both formal and informal assessment tools- throughout the implementation phase of these programmes, the Schonell Test and the British Ability Scales are used. Subsequent careful analysis of testing results is carried out and further learning support input is given where needed. Our ongoing analysis and monitoring of these interventions are showing very positive results for our pupils.

Standardised Tests:

Children are assessed throughout the school on a yearly basis each May/June. The Drumcondra Primary Reading Tests (DPRT), Drumcondra Primary Maths Tests (DPMT) and the Drumcondra Spelling Tests are used for this purpose. The Drumcondra Gaeilge Test is also administered in 2nd, 4th and 6th class. Children in Senior Infants take the MIST test in order to comply with our policy of early identification and remediation of learning difficulties. The parents of children who are identified as having difficulties on the MIST are invited to work with child and learning Support teacher on the “Forward Together” Programme. On occasion the Drumcondra Early Literacy and Numeracy Tests are used for children identified as having difficulties.

Psychological Reports and other reports

Reports from psychologists and other professionals such as Occupational Therapists, Speech Therapists etc; are also stored in the child's file. Teachers are all aware of the sensitive nature of these reports, and they are kept locked at all times.

Recording and Communicating:

On entry to our school, a file is set up for each child. The Enrolment Form will be the first document to be retained in this file. As the years go on, all of the other results as described above will be retained in this file. Each teacher has a one-drawer filing cabinet in the classroom which remains locked at all times, The teacher has a copy of the key, and a spare key is kept in the Principal's office to allow the Principal access to the file.

Parental input and communication to parents

A questionnaire is distributed to parents every 2-3 years to look for feedback on their child's learning, attitude and needs. (See Appendix 3) Teachers use these questionnaires to inform themselves and broaden their knowledge of the child. Information is regularly communicated to parents. In the case of a child with special educational needs or a learning difficulty, regular meetings are held between Learning Support/Resource Teachers and the parents. For all other parents, a Parent- Teacher Meeting is held, usually in November. Information on the child's progress is given to parents. - The sten scores of the standardised test is sent home in the end of year report and a letter will be sent home to explain the standardised tests and the interpretation of the result. Parents are informed that they are welcome at any stage to discuss the progress of their child outside of these formal meetings, if they make an appointment. If a teacher has any concerns, they will always make contact with a parent.

Input from children and child self-assessment

At the start of the year teachers have decided to give the children an opportunity to give their own ideas of their strengths and weaknesses in the form of answering questions about themselves (See Appendix 4) This will be presented in a fun manner as a "Time Capsule" exercise, the idea being that the information children give about themselves will be stored in this capsule, and re-opened at the end of the year to

assess their progress and see how they have developed over the year. The teacher will have access to this information, which will be very helpful.

Also, each child will be given a coloured sticker at the start of the week and will have a week to decide which their best piece of work over the week is. On Friday the child can put this sticker on their best piece of work.

We also have a "pupil of the week" system in the school, whereby a certificate is issued to a child in each class on a weekly basis for effort, behaviour, improvement etc: The child's photograph is taken and displayed on a special notice board.

Other Tests:

Both the Learning Support Teacher and the Resource Teacher, as a matter of course, administer other standardised and diagnostic tests to their pupils:

- Belfield Infant Assessment Test
- Schonell Spelling and Reading Test
- Quest Language and Maths Test
- Miscue Analysis (Teacher Based)
- Neale Analysis
- Bangor Dyslexia Test (Diagnostic)
- NRIT (Non Reading Intelligence Test)

Child Protection Records

These records are highly sensitive and confidential. They will be retained in a locked cabinet in the Principal's office and will not be kept under the child's name, they will be stored under roll numbers.

Other records

Many other records are retained in the school, some of which are listed below:

- Roll books, marked daily by teachers
- Register, stored in Principal's office
- Board of management records, confidential, filed by principal who is secretary to the Board of Management

- Incident book, retained in principal's office, documents incidents of concern e.g. bullying, behavioural issues etc;
- Accident book, documents any accidents of concern or resulting in serious injury, retained in principal's office
- Minutes book, documents minutes of staff meetings
- School Plan, documents policies, curricular plans, procedures and information regarding our school. Retained in principal's office with all staff having copies
- Cuntas Miosuil, records of work covered in classes, retained in principal's office

Success Criteria

We will assess the success of this policy through ongoing monitoring of our system of recordkeeping and the impact on pupil learning and progress.

Implementation

This policy will be implemented with immediate effect.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored by principal and staff on a regular basis, and will be reviewed in June, 2014..

Ratification and Communication

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management on 3rd February 2009, and will be communicated to parents through information letters, which are mentioned in the policy. Parents are welcome to access any of our school policies with prior notice.

Date of Ratification: 10.11.2008

Signed

Mr. Dan Scannel

Chairperson